Globalization and local resistance: the creation of localities in Manila and Bangkok

Berner, Erhard; Korff, Rüdiger

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Arbeitspapier / working paper

Universität Bielefeld
Fakultät für Soziologie

Forschungsschwerpunkt
Entwicklungssoziologie

University of Bielefeld
Faculty of Sociology

Sociology of Development
Research Centre

Universität Bielefeld - Postfach 100 131 - 33501 Bielefeld - Federal Republic of Germany - Tel.(0521)106-4650/4221
Fax (0521)106-2980

WORKING PAPER N^{o} 205

Globalization and Local Resistance: The Creation of Localities in Manila and Bangkok

Erhard Berner / Rüdiger Korff

Bielefeld

ISSN 0936-3408

Globalization and Local Resistance: The Creation of Localities in Manila and Bangkok

Erhard Berner/Rüdiger Korff

Globalization, Diversity and Polarization in the World City

Since the seventies, an awareness of the global interconnectedness of social, economic, political and especially ecological problems has emerged. The ongoing process of globalization is generally recognized. For many observers, it is synonymous with "Westernization" or even "Americanization", especially after the breakdown of the communist bloc. While the triumphant advance of market relations is seen as inevitable, critique is concentrated on the alleged cultural hegemony of the Western world. MacDonald outlets in Beijing, Moscow and every other place of some importance become symbols for what is perceived and deplored as a global leveling to the least common denominator. However, as Featherstone (1990) points out, globalization should not be misunderstood as homogenization. While cities and towns around the world are becoming similar to each other, every one of them is more diverse, various and complex than ever.

There is, indeed, the emergence of a transnational culture and society into which parts of many different cultures are integrated; but it is looking American only insofar as America itself has been diverse from the beginning. Globalization is not the global extension of one particular culture or society, which then is as closely integrated as a national culture, but the selective transnationalization of diverse parts of cultures. It may be argued that through their incorporation into the global culture, specific cultural traits are standardized and thereby lose their "authenticity". Yet as Stauth (1993) has shown this category is, in the first place, dubious itself. Most of what we regard as "traditional" or "grown" cultures today are the very result of coexistence and interference of several different cultures in the past. Through globalization, the limits of national cultures and societies are ultimately transcended.

Although the global society is transnational, it does not cover "global space" but is spatially based at particular places that are located in large cities or metropolises. As Knight and Gappert point out, the global society is in fact an urban society: "With the advent of the global economy, nation building is becoming more and more synonymous with city building. Cities serve as the nexus of the global society." (1989:12). Wirth, in his classic study on "Urbanism as a Way of Life" (1938; see Sennett 1976 for a more recent contribution) has argued that the city, and each city, is always characterized by diversity and heterogeneity. Thus, the internationalization of culture and society is nowhere stronger expressed as in the world cities.

The close interconnection between city and global society requires new perspectives for the analysis of urban social, cultural and economic change. One attempt in this direction is the discussion of the "world city", instigated by Friedmann and Wolff (1982) and taken up in further research (see King 1990 for a detailed discussion). Based on several variables, lists of world cities have been compiled. Although their systematic basis can be disputed[1] they

[1] To draw a categorical line between "world cities" and others is a difficult undertaking and usually ends up in arbitrariness. It can be argued that all cities and even towns are to some degree part of, and affected by, the globalization process. A continuous and hierarchical "system of world cities", from New York and Tokyo down to Redmond, Washington and beyond, may be a more adequate model.

indicate that not all cities are affected equally by globalization, and that not all cities emerge as nodes of transnational flows of information and capital. On the contrary, many cities face a crisis due to economic restructuring and their reduced integration into the world economy. This is most obvious in many Third World cities, namely in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, but old European and American industrial cities like Detroit, Manchester and the Ruhr area are in a process of decline as well. Following Douglass (1988), even Japanese cities face problems due to off-shoring of production processes.

The Metropolitan Dilemma: Demand of Labor and Scarcity of Land

An important finding of empirical studies was that in the world cities, diverging and even contradictory processes take place. The integration into the global society is incomplete and does not concern the city in total but only social, economic and spatial parts of it. Most obvious are the changes at the highest level: Through the concentration of management functions and professionals, spaces emerge that can be seen as parts of a single world city rather than of the city they belong to in a geographical and administrative sense. Just as any city is made up by different quarters the global society, in this perspective, consists of quarters of different cities spread around the globe.

The city serves as a cosmopolitan, innovative milieu (Hall 1966) for the satisfaction of specific needs and demands of the global society. These are satisfied partly by transnational corporations, especially banks, real estate and service companies (Thrift 1987), partly through low paid labor in the informal sector. The extension of this sector is, as Sassen-Koob (1985, 1990) argues, not only due to the downgrading of manufacturing activities but as well linked to the demands of the global society. The world city is essentially dynamic which leads to extensive building activities: Established business centers grow, new ones emerge and gain importance and the demand for high-rise apartment buildings, posh residential quarters, shopping malls and recreation centers is increasing. All these have to be supplied with infrastructure and connected with roads, mass transportation and communication lines.

The production of space for the affluent demand of the high income groups of the global society allows for a much more differentiated use of urban land and, as a result, for extensive land speculation. Skyrocketing prices for real estate and the accompanying economic restructuring of the city lead to huge movements of people. Some of them move deliberately: Their place, especially in the inner city, may have become congested, polluted and noisy, or a high class residential area may offer more amenities and prestige. The greater number of people is forced to be mobile, either because the former living areas are demolished for apartment houses, shopping centers or office buildings, or because employment opportunities within the city have changed or are relocated. Areas emerge that are virtually “out of bounds” for anyone who has no business there. What takes place is a de-differentiation of the city’s population due to social differentiation of urban space.

Another consequence of mobility is that most people have to commute long ways to their workplace. The traffic inferno is a problem for all metropolises and public transportation, although usually insufficient, provides for thousands of jobs. The demand for security per

sonnel, domestic helpers and all kinds of petty services and trade is also rapidly increasing. To remain competitive in what has become a global division of labor, an adequate supply of these services is essential while their price has to be kept low. The growth of the urban poor population is, thus, not an anomaly in the ascent of a metropolis but rather its very result. Castells (1989:206) concludes: "The dual city is not simply the urban social structure resulting from the juxtaposition of the rich and the poor, the yuppies and the homeless, but the result of simultaneous and articulated processes of growth and decline."

This polarization of the city is the result of a fundamental contradiction in the development of a globalizing metropolis: On the one hand, urban land becomes scarce as demand is rapidly increasing; on the other, growing groups of people are far from being able to pay the market price for the use of land. In Munich and Frankfurt (that are minor world cities at most), for example, public employers find it virtually impossible to hire policemen or nurses without providing them with apartments. In most metropolises, the affluent middle classes have coped by moving to suburbs at the urban fringe[2] and accepting long hours of commuting (Butler and Chinitz 1982); in Bangkok, for instance, it is said that professionals and business people spend more time in their cars than with their family. Tokyo as the ultimate world city demonstrates that there is a limit: As it is virtually impossible to find accommodation in commuting distance, many employees spend their nights in honeycomb-like sleeping containers.

For the poor, moving out of the city is not a viable strategy. For those who work long hours for a small income, an increase of the time and money needed for transportation is more than they can deal with.[3] All these groups need to stay "where the action is" (Guerrero 1977) to remain competitive on the contested market of low and medium skilled labor. As they are not able to rent or buy a residence with access to the city – that is, to compete successfully on the likewise contested land market – they can only fall back on extra-economic means. In some welfare states of the industrialized countries, socialized housing and direct rent subsidies solved or at least concealed the metropolitan dilemma during the last decades.

The worsening fiscal crisis and policies of privatization have cut deeply into all public housing programs. City governments in particular face a severe shortage of revenues due to the relocation of manufacturing and the exodus of the more affluent to the suburbs; multinational corporations are often questionable taxpayers. The rapidly growing metropolises in the Third World, of course, have hardly ever been able to effectively implement such programs at all. As a result we observe the emergence of certain areas in the city – namely slums, gettos and shanty towns – where the rules of the market apply only in a very limited sense. Land value becomes an abstract concept in squatter areas and deteriorated tenement blocks; whoever wants to use such land profitably or to sell it at a reasonable (or rather exorbitant) price has to get rid of the residents first.

---

2 The middle classes' retreat fom the inner city to the "sunbelt" has a welcome side effect: Through "suburban exclusion" (Smith 1988:9ff), they can get rid of the problems and conflicts that go along with globalization while still reaping the benefits.

3 In the big cities, this group includes not only the un- and underemployed and the members of the in formal sector but also people who would be regarded as middle class elsewhere: the policemen and nurses mentioned above as well as office clerks, teachers, sales personnel etc.. In Manila, for in stance, a school teacher's lifetime salary is not enough to buy a 100 m² lot (not to mention a house) in a medium class residential area.

In most metropolises, consequently, we find a high percentage of squatters and slum dwellers in relatively close distance to the city center. In a comparative study on slums in Bangkok for instance, Pornchokchai (1985:29) found the following distribution:

Distance from city center	Number of slums	Population in slums (thousands)	Percentage of population in slums
less then 3 km	111	89	8.8%
3 to 5,9 km	335	389	38.5%
6 to 8,9 km	323	313	31.0%
9 to 11,9 km	149	125	12.4%
12 to 14,9 km	56	51	5.0%
15 and more km	46	44	4.4%

Slums, then, are not the outcome of failed city planning but integral parts of the metropolis just like office towers, apartment buildings, hotels and banks. Soja's (1989:193) analysis of Los Angeles seems valid for world cities in general: "Seemingly paradoxical but functionally interdependent juxtapositions are the epitomizing features of contemporary Los Angeles. (…) One can find … not only the high technology industrial complexes of the Silicon Valley and the erratic sunbelt economy of Houston, bur also the far-reaching industrial decline and the bankrupt urban neighborhoods of rust-belted Detroit or Cleveland."

As Marcuse (1989) points out, "dual city" is a "muddy metaphor" for a social reality far more complex. While it emphasizes the difference between boom and decay, the boundaries between globalized universes like Lower Manhattan and deteriorated neighborhoods like Harlem, it tends to neglect the high differentiation within the latter. Whoever crosses the border between Black and Spanish Harlem will – apart from risking life and limb – find it hard to believe that he is still in the same city. We do not find, thus, two opposing worlds, but rather a global society and "a variety of social universes whose fundamental characteristics are their fragmentation, the sharp definition of their boundaries, and the low level of communication with other such universes." (Castells 1989:226). The phenomenon of the quartered city has been conceptualized in urban sociology since the works of the Chicago School; on the background of globalization, it becomes essential to grasp the dynamic and conflictive quality of fragmentation processes.

Migration is a crucial factor for a process we will describe as "localization": Not only ideas and information move around the world but actual people. Formerly, international migration was limited as the flow of information across cultural, social and geographic distances was slow or even absent. With the new information technologies, the new media and the modern transport technology, the spatial distances have been reduced without, however, a reduction of social and cultural distances. Historically, successful "acculturation" in a "melting pot" remained a rare exception; today religious fundamentalism, ethnicity, nationalism and other particularistic orientations come back with a vengeance.[4] The once few and distant

[4] It should be noted that none of these can be adequately interpreted as "genuine" or "primordial" but as reactions to an increasingly complex environment (Giddens 1992: 174; cf. Anderson 1985; Hobsbawm

boundaries between cultures are multiplied and, at the same time, closing in on the everyday life of people who react by reinforcing their own identity. Imagined differences between cultures and classes become social and spatial boundaries that divide the city into different localities.

Our basic hypothesis is, then, that present metropolises are characterized by conflicts between globalization and localization. Localization is the search for a local identity and the creation of localities as foci of everyday life. Although apparently contradictory processes, localization and globalization are closely connected: through globalization itself local diversity is created. Instead of a mere differentiation between world regions, center and periphery today indicate a differentiation between global society and segmented localities, both spatially anchored in world cities. Center and periphery face each other within the metropolis and form the background of intensifying urban conflicts in London, Paris and Los Angeles as well as in Bangkok, Manila, Rio de Janeiro and Mexico City.

Localities and the Emergence of Resistant Groups

Not all groups are affected by globalization in the same way. For the elites, it means enhanced possibilities and an enlarged arena of activities. All other groups are facing the threat of being pushed away from the centers although they have to stay to retain the chance to make a living. As a result of the metropolitan dilemma, access to urban space and its usage is determined not only by economic possibilities but by social, cultural and political relations as well. The majority of the population have no direct links to the elites of the city or the state. As a basis for a whatever limited protection of their interests, they have to develop social agency and become groups themselves. It is the local context – the locality – that provides multiple relations and interdependencies that can be the basis of group building and organization. The creation of localities is almost exclusively restricted to rundown blocks of flats, slums and squatter areas.[5] Local associations, in these places, can become an important means to achieve some bargaining power in conflicts about the use of urban space.

Urban unrest and resistance has been conceptualized under the framework of "urban social movements" (Castells 1977, 1983; for an overview Lowe 1986). While this approach meritoriously emphasizes the role of local communities as focal points of urban struggles, it seems somewhat hampered by its leftist preoccupation with anti-capitalist societal transformation. Castells defines urban social movements as "a collective conscious action aimed at the transformation of the institutionalized urban meaning against the logic, interest, and values of the dominant class" (1983:305); Beauregard (1988:55) sees localities as *per se* engaged in "struggles against capitalism and its agents". Neither Castells's own empirical case studies nor research in the Third World (e.g., Schuurman and van Naerssen 1989) supply much evidence to support the anti-systemic quality of urban struggles. Schuurman

---

and Ranger 1983). Moreover, a closer inspection might reveal that most "traditionalist" and "fundamentalist" movements are in fact based in the cities.

5 In our studies in Manila and Bangkok, we found that local interaction is virtually insignificant in middle and upper class residential areas. Houses and lots are barricaded not only to the outside but against each other, and the telephone has largely replaced neighborhood gossip. Moreover, people are work ing, shopping and spending their pastime in other places.

himself cites the example of the land issue that is, of course, fundamental for urban conflicts: “As long as the struggle is taking place the state is viewed as the foe. The moment land titles are granted then the state is supposed to protect this private property” (1989:19).

Moreover, to become a movement in any sense of the word local groups need to establish close and stable interconnections and communication structures between each other. In this context, Roberts (1970) pessimistic view seems still valid: According to him, the spatial fragmentation of contacts between the urban poor narrows the possibilities of broadly based social organizations among them. Limited access to the means of communication restricts them to the local level and, thereby, prevents the creation of powerful overarching symbols and a strategic, extensive scope of action. Their value system remains essentially parochial, “subordinate” in Parkin’s (1971) sense. It is therefore pointless to blame the urban poor for their “petty-bourgeois mentality” and “dependent ideology”. Local groups may be highly organized and capable of working out solutions for the problem of housing and basic services, effectively hampering and resisting the plans of land developers, city governments and corporations. To investigate the conditions and means of this collective action is a sensible agenda for locality research.

Localities, on the other hand, are neither “urban villages” in an ecological sense nor threatened islands in the stream of dynamic urban development, but are produced by that stream in the first place. A locality must be seen as a response to, and attempt to cope with, the metropolitan environment and the globalization process in particular. Although of course spatially bound and referring to specific places, it is not a geographic but first a social category. On the basis of Giddens’s concept of “locale” as a physical place with “definite boundaries which help to concentrate interactions in one way or another” (1984: 375), we are focusing on the relations, interdependencies and interactions of the people living in that place. According to Dickens (1990:3), the concept of locality is linking “the ways in which people interact with one another, with the physical environment and how they articulate their experiences.”

As localities are socially defined and “created” spatial entities, it can not be presupposed that their boundaries coincide with administrative units. Local research in cities is often hampered by the fact that sub-districts, *kampung* or *barangay* as its units of research are quite arbitrarily defined by the administration and may have little social significance. Although Indonesian state ideology, for instance, attaches a strong connotation of “village” and “community” to the *kampung*, careful empirical research reveals a different picture: “The whole kampung was too large for any formal organization or sense of unity. The inhabitants identified less with the kampung then with clusters of houses along the several paths” (Jellinek 1990:26; see also Sullivan 1992:71; Bremm 1988). From a different perspective, the weakness of local organizations in Indonesian cities sheds a light on the role of the state in the emergence of localities. Suharto´s authoritarian New Order government has established a tight administrative control on all levels of society, prohibiting the emergence of organization outside state sponsored and supervised "cooperatives". As the following case studies of Manila and Bangkok indicate, there are less obstacles for organizing and local resistance in a competitive political environment.

If, like in Indonesia, communality is limited to small clusters of neighbors who cooperate with each other, the concept of community is problematic while that of locality is clearly misleading. Neighborhood is, of course, one of the relations that are crucial for the emergence of social cohesion and, thereby, for the creation of a locality. Yet like kinship and friendship, it is the basis of complex network systems that are concentrated in, but not restricted to, bounded spatial entities. Although the boundaries of what people regard as

"their place" often coincide with streets, rivers and the like, they have to be demarcated and reinforced by social action. Instead of trying to find a general, abstract definition of a locality we will make the actors – that is, groups and associations which are formed on a local basis to pursue local interests – the focus of our analysis. The lack of such groups can be seen as an indicator that the locality itself is not a meaningful and significant entity to its residents, with loyalties attached to clans, cliques or patron-client-relations rather than to the local community.

As Nelson (1979:254f) points out, the precarious legal status and the lack of basic infrastructure are effective incentives to build up organizations in slums, squatter settlements and low-income quarters, with the fear of displacement and eviction as the paramount one. Although the problems are shared by all members of a local community they are not necessarily perceived as common interests that require collective action. For a local association, the problem of trust is crucial: People have to be confident that the activists not only care for themselves but articulate the needs of the whole locality. The capacity to organize is, thus, closely connected with social cohesion and the development of a we-consciousness: Solidarity and mutual trust may emerge on the basis of the actual concentration of social activities, relations, interactions and interdependencies in a locality. Social creativity that implies an evaluation of resources (finances, skills, social relations etc.) is a key factor for this process (Korff 1988).

A locality, then, is the focus of everyday life; it is not merely the place where people reside but where they spend much of their life, their *Lebenswelt* [life-world]. This cannot simply be taken for granted but has to be shown empirically. In the following we present some results of field research in Manila and Bangkok. The Manila section emphasizes the emergence of loyalty, trust and solidarity out of everyday interaction and, thus, the social basis of agency and organization building. In the Bangkok part, actual activities and strategies of local organizations are analyzed based on data from the district of Klong Thoey.

Social Cohesion and Everyday Life: Group Building in Manila Slums

The Manila study started from the supposition that not every urban poor settlement is a locality in the sense we have discussed above. A preliminary survey was done in some 25 slums to identify five research areas with strong associations that are capable to negotiate with landowners, local administrations, politicians etc.. While being diverse in location, population density, physical characteristics and standard of services, all localities that met the condition have one thing in common: They have been settled for 20 years or more. Observations in newer settlements indicate that locality and community can indeed not simply be seen as one and the same: People feel loyal to their relatives and townsmates from the home province rather than to their neighbors.

The predominance of clans and cliques is facilitated by migration patterns: Incoming migrants don't choose the place they move to for its objective features, like accessibility or public services; instead, they go to where their relatives already are. Information about available land for squatting or opportunities to rent in a squatter area is not advertised in Manila's dailies; in the provinces, relatives are virtually the only source. Moreover, one cannot simply walk into a slum and ask for permission to build a shelter. Even though the 'alternative developers', or squatter syndicates, usually operate on a clear commercial basis, a personal introduction is almost always necessary. After having obtained the land rights,

only relatives are addressed for support. They can be asked for loans, provide assistance in the construction of the house or may help to find a job. In short: during the first years, kinship is the only support and security network available.

Consequently, attempts of NGO and church organizers to put up local "People's Organizations"[6] in new settlements tend to bear little fruit: Most people suspect that the association will care only for the needs of a small group. Following Elias (1990), a crucial factor in the emergence of social coherence is time. In the daily routines and interactions, numerous networks are formed, maintained, extended, linked and sometimes dissolved. Physical closeness is a basic factor in the emergence of inter-group relations and, potentially, of social closure in the squatter areas. As walls are thin and windows open one cannot but take intimate part in the ups and downs of his neighbors' marriage, the growing up of their children and the fortunes and misfortunes of their lives. All events and incidents in the neighborhood are subject to intensive gossip that becomes an important means of communication; it is common to say: "I will get the news from the street". The information network is virtually gapless and even family quarrels are discussed quite openly.

The street is the place where much of everyday life takes place. For Jocano (1975:37), "the street is the heart of slum life. (…) It can be safely said that life in Looban is defined in the street." Doorsteps, alleys, street corners and open shacks with benches are scenes of intense communication. As Goss (1990:273) observes, the space created this way is 'communal' and not 'public', that is, "space defined and defended for the daily routines of reproduction and to protect the relative intimacy of the *looban* [inner part of a residential district] from disturbance and disruption to those routines." The territorial aspect is clear: Any stranger who enters the compound without being accompanied by a trustworthy person is immediately and aggressively asked for his business to be there. Within their territory, residents feel safe and comfortable, it is "their place" in a possessive sense. The environment is familiar, faces and personalities are well known, events predictable and activities regular. Furthermore, respondents often mention the practical purpose of security: Squatter houses that are built of light materials can be easily penetrated by burglars and thieves.

Neighborhood, then, is the first and basic spatial concept that becomes socially significant. As Jocano (1975:169) puts it: "It is this proximity - physical, territorial, and social - that structures neighborhood ties and establishes bonds of common interest among the people. The nearer the residences are to each other the more frequent the interactions, and therefore, the closer are the ties." To be a neighbor, a person must live next door or at least in a limited distance, often connected with visibility. As Nelson (1979:256) rightly remarks, there is no automatism in the emergence of social cohesion: "Familiarity does not necessarily produce either affection or trust, but lack of familiarity almost automatically means distrust and uncertainty." Not everyone who is living nearby is regarded as a neighbor: Some persons do not really belong to the neighborhood, often because they have moved in only recently and cannot yet be trusted and relied upon.

Neighborhood is, basically, a female relationship: Most of the activities and interactions that constitute neighborhood are carried out by the female residents. Women meet at the public faucets to do the laundry; exchange rice or other food for cooking; go to the market together or care for the neighbor's children while she is out shopping; or just sit together and watch

---

6 In the Philippines, "People's Organization" or PO is a clearly defined term for self-help groups, in contrast to NGOs whose goal is to help others. The complicated cooperation between both is discussed by Gregorio-Medel (1993).

the children play. In short, they share much of the daily routine that becomes the basis of mutual trust and, quite frequently, of intimacy and friendship. When we asked people where they meet their friends, only nine out of 253 respondents named places outside their locality.

Friendship, then, is another important mechanism of integration, especially for the men. Alcohol plays a role in most of their everyday 'ceremonies' and has an important bonding function. Reasons to drink are easily found: An overseas worker comes home for holidays or for good; the selling of pigs or the victory of a fighting cock has brought some 'extra' income; someone in the neighborhood has birthday; or it simply rains heavily so that other activities have to be avoided. A drinking session is almost always held in the open. People meet either in front of the store that supplies the spirits or just outside their houses. For many male residents, drinking together is a means to emphasize trust and intimacy as well as imagined equality, a basis of group formation and an effective way to establish and maintain an informal network of support.

It should be noted that kinship, neighborhood and friendship are marked by a different degree of choice: One is, in principle, born with relatives, can influence who his neighbors are, and freely choose his friends. Yet the concepts are not exclusive in social reality; they often coincide, overlap, reaffirm and reinforce each other. Our findings indicate that, beyond the nuclear family, it takes more than consanguinity and affinity to establish a significant and reliable social relationship. If relatives are living close by and share the interactions of everyday life they become 'close' relatives regardless of the actual degree of consanguinity; a cousin may often be closer as a sibling. Kinship, then, is a starting point for building up an alliance network rather than its only or major basis. Moreover, it is an essentially dynamic system despite its apparent primordial basis: Consanguine ties may lose their relevance over time if they are not reinforced by frequent interaction. Eventually, the adoption and expansion of the Spanish *compadrazgo* system adds a strong element of selectivity to kinship.

Of all events and occasions that bring together people from different origins and various walks of life, weddings are probably the most momentous and far-reaching ones. Not only do wife and husband normally come from different families; as our survey shows, the bonds of marriage cross all boundaries of 'ethnic' and language groups. In the research areas, sponsors are chosen out of those who are socially close, that is, relatives, neighbors and friends; two thirds of all *kumpare* and *kumare* live in the locality. Pronounced social differentiation in the localities allows for a strategic selection of alliance partners that are relatively wealthy or control vital resources like credit, housing or access to jobs. Yet like kinship, *compadrazgo* needs to be maintained and reaffirmed by everyday interaction to remain significant. *Compadrazgo* ties are losing their relevance as a basis of social action if their basis, namely personal closeness, friendship, affection and trust, is fading away.

According to our data, there is a difference between the creation of social cohesion in a locality that is a precarious process and drags on for a long time, and the integration of newcomers that is achieved in a very limited period. Within the five research localities, we find a high density and intensity of social interactions and interdependencies that result in the emergence of relatively stable and durable alliances. A lot of ego-centered networks, centered in the locality and formalized in *compadrazgo* relations, are connected and interlaced in a limited number of households, many of them long established and relatively wealthy. It is these households that become cores in the process of community building, and in the formation of organized groups that are capable of acting together. Marked social differentiation provides for a potential of eloquent and often dedicated community leaders who are able to define pursue matters of common interest.

The degree of organization is high: In a squatter settlement at the urban fringe where virtually all residents are house owners, every respondent claimed to be a member of the local association. In other localities up to one third of the population are house and room renters who hardly participate in the association activities. Some of them don't know whether they are members; as residents, they feel they should be included but they are not invited to meetings and informed about plans. Renters, in general are likely to remain peripheral even if they are long-term residents and well-off economically. Two reasons that are closely interrelated can be cited for this fact: Firstly, renters are actually not accepted as neighbors and full members of the community. Secondly, many of them have the aspiration to eventually acquire land rights and become house owners themselves. As this is hardly possible within densely populated areas they see the time they spend there as a transitory period and do not even wish to develop roots. Nelson's (1979:253) secondary analysis of empirical material confirms that neighborhood associations are generally rare in rental quarters.

The organizations we analyzed are functioning for many years. In many cases, they are able to organize communal interests quite successfully and to acquire financial contributions from politicians and business people. Facilities like deep wells, cemented pathways, chapels, playgrounds and basketball courts become powerful symbols for the "decent life" that can be led in - and only in - that locality.[7] Even a re-definition of centrality is possible: Many people regard their place as the best and most important in all of Manila. Common interests are communicated easily, and in case of demolition threats the association takes charge of mobilizing outside support and entering negotiations. In a particularly contested area near booming Ortigas Ave. in Pasig, the land owner is suspected to burn the place down rather than wait for a court order.[8] To defend their locality, the association organized a nightly fire patrol for many months, with 12 people joining in every shift.

In situations of immediate danger for the territorial basis of their community life, the common interest of all residents is paramount and, thus, likely to conceal latent conflicts of interests between them. Ironically, the ultimate success of one local organization – the legal purchase of the locality land through the Community Mortgage Program – had a deeply disruptive impact on the community. For about one third of the population, mainly the poorer ones, it meant that they had to pay for the land they used to live on for free, and pay more than they could afford. The association, now turned landowner and developer, was pushing hard on non-participants to leave the locality and started to negotiate the sale of their lots to outsiders. Although the situation was dramatic and the danger of bloodshed seemed imminent, it became also visible that people had realized the necessity to organize to protect their interests: A counter-association of the affected families was formed immediately after the land transfer.

While the creation of localities and local based groups opens some chances for resistance in the metropolises, the limitations of such action should not be overlooked. Being genuinely particularistic and often narrow-minded, communication between the groups tends to be very difficult, not to mention the building of effective networks beyond the local level. Even

---

[7] This does not imply that localies are idyllic, conflict-free places: Exploitation, competition, drug and alcohol abuse etc. are very much part of the local reality.

[8] The suspicion is, by the way, not at all far-fetched: To chase a kerosine-drenched, burning live rat into an annoying squatter settlement is an increas ingly popular method among Manila landlords (Tabora 1991).

in Manila that, according to Aldrich (1985:5), has the highest level of organization and mobilization in Southeast Asia, attempts to build up citywide umbrella organizations have been short-lived and relatively ineffective. Localization is often connected to marginalization, and the weight of a single locality opposite the administration, land developers and mass media is certainly negligible. To achieve some impact, thus, local organizations are dependent on vertical links and alliances; some of them fall prey to politicians whose populist stance is merely lip service.

In the Philippines, the rather competitive political structure implies the existence of institutionalized democratic channels of influence that provide for relatively extensive chances for action. As the vast majority of the voters is not wealthy politicians are forced to maneuver carefully; they can ill afford to be perceived as 'anti-poor'. Hence, no congressman dared to vote against the quite progressive "Urban Development and Housing Act" of 1992. Accordingly, the state and the Metro Manila administration in particular has to devise (at least partially) policies taking the articulated interests of the urban poor into consideration. Moreover, an increasing number of non-government organizations is taking on an intermediary role. Whether they are indeed a "voice for the voiceless" or merely try to establish themselves as a new set of patrons is an empirical question; we have found some clues that the local organizations are at least pretty stubborn clients.

Locality and Urban Conflict in Bangkok

In Bangkok, like in most other primate cities in Southeast Asia, slums emerged with the rapid urbanization after the Second World War, especially during the sixties. Economic development of the primate cities on one hand, and changes of rural society on the other, lead to huge influx of migrants to the cities. As neither the state nor the private sector was able or willing to provide sufficient and adequate housing for these migrants, slum and squatter areas were developed on unused land. Many of these slums were located at what was the periphery of the city at that time, but in the accelerating course of urbanization they soon became part of the inner city. Especially since the mid-eighties when the demand for urban space for shopping centers, apartment houses and offices rapidly increased, slums were in danger of eviction and partly evicted.[9] Following data collected by Boonyabancha (1982:18) the inner city slums in particular are in danger of demolition as a more profitable land use is possible.

Up to the seventies, slum eviction was not regarded as an important issue and met little resistance. One reason was the repressive character of the military government at that time; moreover, it was not difficult to find alternative shelter on land close to the former place. This changed in the seventies, when eviction implied expulsion to the urban fringe and the political system, after the fall of military rule, offered more chances for organization and articulation of demands for slum dwellers. In the following we will discuss the case of Klong Thoey slum, located close to the harbor, at a spot which once was at the periphery and now is prime land in Bangkok.

Klong Thoey slum emerged as a squatter slum in the sixties. The harbor provided employment for the people and the land was unattractive for commercial use as it was swampy

[9] For a more detailed discussion of slum development in Bangkok see Nathalang (1978) and Vichit-Vadakan (1975)

and at a distance from the city proper. In the process of urban growth the metropolis closed in on Klong Thoey: Through the building of a highway with a large intersection in the area and the extension of existing markets it became a part of inner Bangkok, in fact a part of the commercial center of Bangkok. In the process of internationalization the pressure on squatters on the harbor land increased: The container terminal was extended and more and more office buildings are established in the district of Klong Thoey. In 1990, 20% of all new constructions in Bangkok were located in Klong Thoey. Of these, less than 40% were used for housing (mainly as apartment houses) and the rest for commerce and office high rise buildings. Of a total of 105 buildings under construction in the district of Klong Thoey, 87 have 6 or more storeys and 23 more than 30 (Bangkok Municipality Statistical Report 1990:152ff). During the last year land prices in the area increased in the more expensive parts by 80% and in the cheaper parts by 150% (Alpha Research 1992:157).

In the area of Klong Thoey the metropolitan dilemma is obvious as we find both, a concentration of central metropolitan activities that are connected to the global level and a concentration of people living in slum areas. Consequently, a conflict between profitable land use on one hand and usage of the land by the people on the other is clear: Eviction and slum demolition have become a severe problem and the chances of the people to stay in the area depends on their ability to organize resistance. As we have argued this ability is connected to the emergence of localities and social agency through locally based, close social relations. In the analysis of a slum area in Bangkok in the early seventies, Rabibhadana (1975:247) observes considerable fragmentation: Social networks beyond the household consisted primarily of patron-client relations. The patrons were able to establish themselves through the control of resources needed by others. The slum in total was not strongly integrated but divided into several different network systems centered around some patrons. In Klong Thoey a similar pattern existed until the seventies: Persons who could provide jobs, credit or other support to a clientele, particularly foremen in the harbor, served as informal leaders.

During the seventies a change took place in Klong Thoey, partly connected to slum upgrading projects, partly to political changes like the student movement in Thailand. Some young, well-educated people started to engage in forms of social work within the slum. Through their initiative, a school was set up and a youth club established to fight against drug abuse among youth.[10] In the course of these activities groups emerged that were not organized along patron-client lines but with an emphasis on equality although some persons, of course, performed leadership functions. As members have a better education they increasingly act as intermediates between the slum leaders and the administration. Little by little the Youth Club became the leading force within the slum and started to criticize the old leaders.

The change from patron - client relations towards groups is indicated by the importance of friendship. Friends help to find a job, to build or repair the house etc.; as one respondent put it, “friends visit each other regularly, they eat and drink together and help in case of need”. As a result, we find different cooperative groups of friends, colleagues or neighbors in the slum, and some of them aim at a general improvement of the locality. Through several interconnections based mainly on personal relations among members of different groups, an astonishingly high degree of organization for a common issue is possible. This was

[10] The activities resemble those of NGOs, and one of the leading persons indeed received the Magsaysay award for exemplary community work. Unlike most NGOs, however, the “clubs” in Klong Thoey were not initiated from the outside but from within.

demonstrated in the struggle against eviction in the eighties. As Klong Thoey slum is located on land belonging to the Port Authority of Thailand, some parts were affected by plans for harbor extension. The existing associations organized the resistance through regular meetings, contacts to the media, NGOs, political parties etc.

As many group members had a better education and themselves set up an NGO, they did not depend on others to articulate their demands, but the bargaining was done by themselves. They used other NGOs, political parties and the media to publicize their issue. In addition, they could establish even international contacts thereby strengthening their position vis-à-vis the Bangkok Municipality and the state. Klong Thoey became a symbolic locality of resistance that had to be recognized by the administration. Internal coherence was achieved through three main measures. Firstly, as the association leaders were born in the area and well known and respected, the slum residents regarded them as the proper persons to push forward their interests. Secondly, through interconnections between the different groups and networks a high degree of organization for meetings and demonstrations was possible. Thirdly, the new leaders were integrated into and controlled by the locality and, thus, could not be bribed or follow their own interests on the expense of the others. When finally a compromise was agreed upon, those affected by eviction were resettled on an adjacent plot of land with a 25 year lease arrangement.

The efficiency of the existing organizations was demonstrated again in 1992 when one part of the slum burned down[11]. Although this area was earmarked for eviction during the next years those affected by the fire were given compensation and material to rebuild their houses. During the night of the fire, a new association (Klong Thoey Disaster Relief Organization) was established immediately to claim support from other NGOs, the Bangkok Municipality and the National Housing Authority. When promised material was delayed they ordered building material themselves and organized its distribution, which was quite a large task as 250 houses had been affected. The organizations regard themselves as those in charge of social and, sometimes, political affairs in the whole slum area. They felt responsible to organize activities far beyond the scope of neighborhood, but concerning the locality as a whole.

Conclusions

The dual process of globalization and localization in the metropolises provides a challenging perspective for urban sociology and urban anthropology. Particularly in the mega-cities of the Third World, this process is highly contradictory and leads to intensifying conflicts about the use of urban land. By concentrating on the emerging localities and local forms of organization, we illustrated that globalization inevitably remains incomplete. The social creativity and agency of the city dwellers make them actors rather than objects or victims in the dynamics of change of the city. Localities, thus, provide a starting point for urban studies in which global, structural development can be linked with local processes and everyday life. From such a perspective, it seems possible to connect a sociological macro-perspective of a world-system with anthropological research on the formation of local groups.

Initial empirical results are encouraging: In established slums in Manila and Bangkok we found closely knit social networks beyond kinship and ethnicity that are the basis of local

[11] In this case there is no reason to suspect that the fire was started to facilitate eviction.

organizations. Personal relations in everyday life, like neighborhood and friendship allow for social control, a rapid spread of information and a potential for the emergence of trust and solidarity. On this basis the organization are capable to mobilize the residents of a locality and articulate and pursue their interests and demands. Though the poor's access to bargaining power is quite limited even in competitive political systems it has effects for the physical as well as for the social image of the metropolis. Through globalization, urban traditions and symbols have been reduced to mere decor, and the economic production of urban space has given rise to uniform centers and dreary residential quarters. Instead of urbanity we find "Unwirtlichkeit" (inhospitability). The maintenance and defense of localities plays an important role in the preservation of diversity and heterogeneity that is a fundamental characteristic of urbanism. It is from the local context that steps toward an (at least partly) use-value oriented city can be taken in which the inhabitants are able to define the meaning of the places they live in.

References

Aldrich, B.C. 1985: Habitat Defense in Southeast Asian Cities . *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 13, 1-14

Alpha Research 1992: *Analysis of Land Prices throughout Thailand, 2535 to 2538 B.E.* . Bangkok: Alpha Research (in Thai)

Anderson, B.R.O. 1985: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso

Bangkok Municipality, Department for Planing and Policy 1991: *Annual Statistics of Bangkok Metropolis, 1990*. Bangkok (in Thai)

Beauregard, R.A. 1988: In the Absence of Practice: The Locality Research Debate. *Antipode* 20 52-59

Boonyabancha Somsook 1982: Causes and Effects of Slum Eviction in Bangkok, Paper read at the *International Seminar on "Land for Housing the Urban Poor"* (January 1982) in Bangkok

Bremm, H. 1988: Nachbarschaftsbeziehungen in einem javanischen Kampung. In T. Schweizer, editor, *Netzwerkanalyse. Ethnologische Perspektiven* . Berlin: Reimer, 47-62

Butler, K. and Chinitz, B. 1982: Urban Growth in the Sunbelt. In G. Gappert and R.V. Knight, *Cities in the 21st Century.* Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage, 97-111

Castells, M. 1977: *The Urban Question*. London: Edward Arnold

Castells, M. 1983: *The City and the Grass Roots*. London: Edward Arnold

Castells, M. 1989: *The Informational City. Information Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban-Regional Process*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell

Dickens, P. 1990: *Urban Sociology. Society, Locality, and Human Nature* . New York, London, Toronto, Sidney and Singapore: Harvester Wheatsheaf

Douglass, M. 1988: The Transnationalization of Urbanization in Japan, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 12, 425-454

Elias, N. 1990: Zur Theorie von Etablierten-Außenseiter-Beziehungen. In N.Elias and J.L. Scotson, *Etablierte und Außenseiter*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 7-56

Featherstone, M. 1990: Global Culture: An Introduction. In M. Featherstone, editor, *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity.* London, Newbury Park and New Delhi: Sage, 1-14

Friedmann, J. and Wolff, G. 1982: World City Formation: An Agenda for Research and Action. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 10, 330-356

Giddens, A. 1984: *The Constitution of Society. Outline of a Theory of Structuration.* Oxford: Polity Press

Giddens, A. 1992: Commentary on the Reviews. *Theory, Culture and Society* 9, 171-174

Goss, J.D. 1990: *Production and Reproduction Among the Urban Poor of Metro Manila: Relations of Exploitation and Conditions of Existence.* Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kentucky

Guerrero, S.H. 1977: Staying Where the Action is: Relocation Within the City. *Philippine Sociological Revue* 25, 51-56

Hall, P. 1966: *The World Cities.* London, New York: Penguin

Hobsbawm, E.J. and Ranger, T., editors, 1983: *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Jellinek, L. 1990: *Wheel of Fortune.* Sydney: Allen and Unwin

Jocano, F.L. 1975: *Slum as a Way of Life: A Study of Coping Behavior in an Urban Environment* . Quezon City: New Day

King, D.S. 1990: *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy: Cultural and Spatial Foundations of the World Urban System.* London and New York: Routledge

Knight, R.V. and Gappert, G. 1989: Preface. In Knight, R.V. and Gappert, G., editors, *Cities in a Global Society.* Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage, 11-13

Korff, R. 1988: Informeller Sektor oder Marktwirtschaft? Märkte und Händler in Bangkok. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 17, 196-307

Lowe, S. 1986: *Urban Social Movements: The City After Castells* . Basingstoke and London: Macmillan

Marcuse, P. 1989: Dual City: A Muddy Metaphor for a Quartered City. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 13, 697-720

Nathalang, W., editor, 1978: *Housing in Thailand.* Bangkok: Applied Research Corporation of Thailand

Nelson, J.M. 1979: *Access to Power: Politics and the Urban Poor in Developing Countries.* Princeton: Princeton University Press

Parkin, F. 1971: *Class Inequality and the Political Order* . London: MacGibbon & Kee

Pornchokchai Sopon 1985: *1020*. Bangkok: Japanese Volunteer Center in Thailand (in Thai)

Rabibhadana Akin 1975 *Bangkok Slum: Aspects of Social Organization* . Ph.D.-Thesis, Cornell University

Roberts, B. 1970: The Social Organization of Low-Income Families. In Horowitz, I.L., editor, *Masses in Latin America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 345-385

Sassen-Koob, S. 1985: Capital Mobility and Labor Migration: Their Expression in Core Cities. In Timberlake, M., editor, *Urbanization in the World-Economy.* Orlando, San Diego, New York and London: Academic Press, 231-265

Sassen-Koob, S. 1990: Growth and Informatization at the Core: A Preliminary Report on New York City. In Smith, M.P. and Feagin, J.R., editors, *The Capitalist City: Global Restructuring and Community Politics* . Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell, 138-154

Schuurman, F.J. 1989: Urban Social Movements: Between Regressive Utopia and Socialist Pancea. In Schuurman, F.J. and van Naerssen, T., editors, *Urban Social Movements in the Third World.* London and New York: Routledge, 9-26

Schuurman, F.J. and van Naerssen, T., editors, 1989: *Urban Social Movements in the Third World.* London and New York: Routledge

Sennett, R. 1976: *The Fall of Public Man.* New York: Knopf

Soja, E. 1989: *Postmodern Geographics: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* . London and New York: Verso

Stauth, G. 1993: Leonard Binder and the Hermeneutics of Authenticity: A Critical Remark. *Review of Middle East Studies* 6, 85-105

Sullivan, J. 1992: *Local Government and Community in Java: An Urban Case Study.* Singapore, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press

Tabora, J. 1991: Rats, Molotov Cocktails, Hellfire. *Manila Chronicle*, January 26, 4

Thrift, N. 1987: The Fixers: The Urban Geography of International Commercial Capital. In Henderson, J. and Castells, M., editors, *Global Restructuring and Territorial Development.* London: Sage, 203-233

Vichit-Vadakan, V., editor, 1975: *Urbanization in the Bangkok Central Region.* Bangkok: TURA

Wirth, L. 1938 Urbanism as a Way of Life, *American Journal of Sociology* 44, 1-24